



Federal Bureau of
Investigation



Bureau of Indian Affairs



Coconino County Sheriff's
Office



U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Arizona

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HAVASUPAI MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO 2ND DEGREE MURDER OF JAPANESE TOURIST TOMOMI HANAMURE

PHOENIX – Randy Redtail Wescogame, 19, of the Havasupai Indian Tribe, pleaded guilty today to Second Degree Murder for the murder of Tomomi Hanamure, a Japanese tourist who was killed on her 34th birthday after going for a hike to the Havasupai Falls. In pleading guilty in front of U.S. Magistrate Judge Edward C. Voss, Wescogame has agreed to a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release.

“Today’s result shows the continued commitment by the Coconino County Sheriff’s Office, the FBI, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Havasupai Community and the U.S. Attorney’s Office to bring forth justice in this case,” said Daniel G. Knauss, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona. “Our hope is that this guilty plea will allow Ms. Hanamure’s family to continue the healing process for their loss.”

Hanamure, 34, was reported missing on May 9, 2006, a day after she checked into a lodge on the Havasupai Indian Reservation and left for a hike to the Havasupai Falls on her 34th birthday. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Coconino County Sheriff’s Office initiated a search and rescue operation. Her body was located on May 13 in a secluded section of the river. An autopsy revealed that Hanamure died as a result of approximately 30 stab wounds.

“We are extremely gratified to hear of Randy Wescogame’s guilty plea, and believe it is a direct result of a close working relationship and cooperation between local, state and federal law enforcement, during the investigation of this case,” stated Coconino County Sheriff Bill Pribil. “We hope this provides some closure for the Hanamure Family and their devastating loss.”

"As with many crimes in Indian Country, the vastness and seclusion of crime scenes make these investigations challenging." As FBI Special Agent in Charge John E. Lewis explained, "This case was no exception as FBI agents alongside officers with the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, accessed a crime scene more than 160 miles from their investigating agencies and ten miles from the nearest road."

Selanhongva McDonald, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services, added that “Due to the hard work and cooperation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the FBI, and Coconino Sheriff’s Office, Randy Wescogame was brought to justice. The Havasupai Tribe’s support and assistance in this investigation was invaluable.”

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Wescogame has been in federal custody since December 2006. The five-count indictment by a federal grand jury in December 2006 in Phoenix alleged that Wescogame willfully murdered Hanamure in the course of kidnaping and robbing her on May 8, 2006. The charges in the indictment were Premeditated First Degree Murder, First Degree Felony Murder-Robbery, Robbery, First Degree Felony Murder Kidnaping, and Kidnaping.

A copy of the plea agreement from today's hearing will be available after filing at <https://ecf.azd.uscourts.gov>. Upon sentencing in front of a federal judge at 2:00 p.m. on January 14, 2008, U.S. District Court Judge Mary H. Murguia will consult the sentencing guidelines in deciding whether to accept Wescogame's plea agreement.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Arizona Department of Public Safety. The prosecution is being handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-1077-PCT
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